

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: TOCY, CI
SUBJ: CHILEAN REQUIREMENTS FOR R/V CLEARANCES

REF: STATE 46802

1. EMBASSY SCIENCE OFFICER DISCUSSED SUBSTANCE OF REFTTEL WITH CAPTAIN ARTURO DE LA BARRERA AND LT. ENRIQUE ROSS FROM THE OFFICE OF THE CHILEAN NAVY CHIEF OF STAFF ON 13 AND 14 MARCH. CAPTAIN DE LA BARRERA AGREED THAT CLEARANCE PROCEDURES FOR RESEARCH VESSELS WERE UNNECESSARILY COMPLICATED, HOWEVER WELL INTENDED. HE POINTED OUT THAT THE REAL PURPOSE IN REQUESTING THE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION WAS TO ENABLE THE CHILEAN NAVY TO BE OF GREATER ASSISTANCE TO VISITING VESSELS, ESPECIALLY DURING PORT CALLS. THE SUGGESTION THAT ESSENTIAL INFORMATION ON SHIP'S CREW AND PASSENGERS BE PROVIDED AT TIME OF PORT CALL THROUGH THE VESSEL'S SHIPPING AGENTS OR DIRECTLY TO LOCAL OFFICIALS MADE SENSE TO HIM BUT WOULD HAVE TO BE APPROVED HIGHER UP IN THE CHIEF OF STAFF HIERARCHY. HE ALSO THOUGHT THAT ACCESS TO RESTRICTED PATAGONIAN CANALS FOR SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH COULD BE APPROVED ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS. HE AGREED TO PROVIDE EMBASSY WITH A CHART LISTING THOSE PATAGONIAN CANALS WHICH ARE ON THE NAVY'S RESTRICTED LIST. SUCH A CHART WAS REQUESTED EXACTLY ONE YEAR AGO BUT WAS NEVER DELIVERED DESPITE SEVERAL REMINDERS. HE WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC ABOUT STANDARDIZING CLEARANCE PROCEDURES AND CHANNELLING ALL INFORMATION

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REQUESTS THROUGH ONE ENTITY SUCH AS HIS OFFICE. HE EXPLAINED THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY AND HYDROGRAPHIC INSTITUTE HAD DIFFERENT INFORMATION NEEDS FROM THOSE OF HIS OFFICE AND WOULD LIKELY CONTINUE EXERCISING THEIR AUTONOMY IN REQUESTING THE INFORMATION.

2. FYI: RESEARCH VESSEL CLEARANCE PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN DISCUSSED

WITH CHILEAN NAVAL OFFICERS AT DIFFERENT LEVELS OF THE HIERARCHY SEVERAL TIME IN THE PAST SIX MONTHS. THE LAST SUCH CONVERSATION OCCURRED WITH LT. ROSAS OF THE OFFICE OF CHIEF OF STAFF APPROXIMATELY ONE MONTH AGO. ON DECEMBER 29, 1977, A SIMILAR CONVERSATION TOOK PLACE WITH NAVY CHIEF OF STAFF ADMIRAL CARLOS LEMAY AND DIRECTOR OF THE HYDROGRAPHIC INSTITUTE OF THE NAVY, CAPT. RAUL HERRERA. BEYOND THAT, THE MATTER HAS BEEN DISCUSSED WITH CAPTAIN JAIME CONTRERAS, DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE OFFICE OF SPECIAL POLITICAL MATTERS IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY, AND ON AN INFORMAL LEVEL WITH FORMER SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE NAVY CAPT. RAMON UNDURRAGA. ADDITIONALLY, WE HAVE TOUCHED ON THE SUBJECT WITH LESSER OFFICERS IN THE HYDROGRAPHIC INSTITUTE AND HAVE EVEN EXPLAINED OUR PROBLEM TO THE COMMITTEE ON OCEANOGRAPHY. ON EACH OCCASION WE HAVE BEEN TREATED WITH GREAT DEFERENCE AND HAVE BEEN PROMISED IMPROVEMENTS IN CLEARANCE PROCEDURES. IF ANYTHING, THE PROCEDURES BECAME MORE COMPLICATED AFTER EACH INTERVIEW.

3. ALL OF PARAGRAPH 2 ABOVE IS IN THE WAY OF SAYING, DON'T HOLD YOUR BREATH UNTIL THE NAVY AGREES TO AND COMPLIES WITH MORE SIMPLIFIED CLEARANCE PROCEDURES. THEIR TRACK RECORD IN COMPLYING WITH PROMISES MADE CONCERNING RESEARCH VESSEL CLEARANCE SINCE JULY 1976, HAS BEEN ABOMINABLE. WE ARE FRANKLY NOT VERY OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THE PENDING RESULTS OF THIS INTERVIEW BUT ARE DISPOSED TO KEEP TRYING IN WHATEVER MANNER DEPARTMENT MAY SUGGEST.

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